



## New Zealand

### Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2001](#)

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor  
March 4, 2002

New Zealand is a parliamentary democracy, with executive authority vested in a 20-member cabinet led by the Prime Minister. Queen Elizabeth II is Chief of State and is represented by Governor General Dame Silvia Cartwright. The 120-member Parliament is elected in a mixed-member proportional representation system, with 6 seats reserved for members of the native Maori population. Citizens periodically choose their representatives in free and fair multiparty elections. The judiciary is independent.

The national police maintain internal security, and the Minister of Police controls the force. The civilian authorities maintain effective control of the security forces. The police committed some abuses during the year.

The country has a population of approximately 3.8 million; it produces agricultural products and exports wool, meat, and dairy products. Tourism, forestry, fishing, and manufacturing are significant economic sectors. Disparities in wealth are small but increasing. Government social programs offer substantial benefits to disadvantaged persons.

The Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens, and the law and judiciary provided effective means of dealing with individual instances of abuse. Police abuse, violence against women, and societal discrimination against persons with disabilities, indigenous people, Pacific islanders, and Asians are problems; however, the Government has taken steps to address them. Child abuse is a problem. Trafficking in persons has been a problem in previous years; however, there were no cases during the year. The Government generally respected the human rights of citizens living in its territories of Tokelau, Niue, and Cook Islands.

#### RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

##### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

###### a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports of the arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life committed by the Government or its agents.

###### b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

###### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibits torture and other forms of mistreatment, and the Government generally respects these prohibitions in practice.

Charges of police abuse increased slightly from 2000, and there were instances of police abuse during the year. The Police Complaints Authority accepted 2,468 complaints in 2000-01, which was a 1.64 percent increase over the previous year; however, the number of cases upheld declined by over 5 percent (from 159 to 150). There were only 3 cases of police misconduct in 2000 that involved deaths, down from 11 in 1999 and 21

in 1997-98. In another case, in May 2000, a police officer fatally shot a Maori youth, leading public officials, including the Prime Minister, to urge better police-Maori relations. The officer, also of Maori descent, was found by an internal police investigation in August 2000 to have acted in self-defense and was exonerated. The case continued during the year as the officer sought to protect his identity from the public; however, in October the officer lost his court bid to maintain his privacy. There were no further investigations during the year.

Prison conditions generally meet international standards; overcrowding no longer is a significant problem. At year's end, the inmate population totaled 5,982 with prison bed capacity of about 6,000. The inmate population is projected to increase to about 6,040 by 2002. During the year, the female inmate population fell 22 percent from 300 in 2000 to 233. There were no reports that women were housed in men's prisons, as had occurred in 2000. Since 1999 the Government has been adding prison beds for women resulting in a total capacity of 344 beds. The Government is responding to overcrowding by building new prisons. In July 2000, the new Auckland Central Remand Prison opened with beds for 360 male inmates. Two other new prisons are scheduled to open in 2002 and 2003. Construction begun during 2000 to improve older prisons in Dunedin and Invercargill was completed during the year.

Assaults in prisons (mostly inmate on inmate) rose from 97 to 120 in 1999-2000; however, suicides declined from 8 to 6. Over 98 percent of prison officers are trained in suicide awareness.

The Government responded to a mid year strike by prison guards by ordering the armed forces to operate prisons; the strike lasted 2 weeks and was resolved by mutually acceptable compromises.

Maori inmates constituted more than half the prison population, although Maori represent only 15 percent of the general population. The Government sought to reduce the problem of Maori recidivism through Maori focus units, which integrate Maori values into the rehabilitation program (see Section 5).

Special problems also exist concerning the treatment of youth offenders. At year's end, 6 percent of the total inmate population was under the age of 20 compared with 18 percent in 1998. Two special units for inmates under the age of 17 and vulnerable 17- to 19-year-olds opened during 2000. They provide a peer-based approach to rehabilitation. In July 2000, the Government announced that it planned to build two new youth units and expand a third, increasing capacity for youth offenders by 142 beds by March; however, conflicts over their locations delayed the targeted completion dates of these facilities. Moreover, despite increases in capacity, a shortage of beds in youth facilities continued during the year. These juvenile detainees come under the jurisdiction of Child, Youth, and Family Services rather than the police. CYFS has a capacity of 100 beds and is seeking an additional 25. In one case, a 15-year-old male was kept in a police cell in Napier for 4 nights in October before there was available space in a youth facility.

The Government permits visits by independent human rights monitors.

#### d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile, and the Government generally observes these prohibitions.

#### e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The law provides for an independent judiciary, and the Government generally respects this provision in practice.

There is an impartial judiciary, with the right of appeal to the Privy Council in London, United Kingdom, although this option rarely is invoked. Within the country, the Court of Appeal is the highest appellate court, and it determines appeals from the High Court, which has original jurisdiction for major crimes and important civil claims. The High Court also hears appeals from lower courts and reviews administrative actions. Remaining original jurisdiction rests with 110 judges of the district courts. Special courts include the Employment Court, family courts, youth courts, the Maori Land Court, the Maori Appellate Court, and the Environment Court.

The law provides for the right to a fair trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforces this right.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

#### f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The law prohibits such actions, and the Government generally respects these prohibitions in practice.

## Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

### a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The law provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government generally respects these rights in practice. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combine to ensure freedom of speech and of the press.

Academic freedom is respected.

### b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The law provides for the freedoms of assembly and association, and the Government generally respects these rights in practice.

### c. Freedom of Religion

The law provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

### d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The law provides for these rights, and the Government generally respects them in practice.

The law provides for the granting of asylum and refugee status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Government cooperates with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees. The Government provides first asylum. Under its refugee quota, the Government accepts up to 750 UNHCR-approved refugees per year. As part of this quota, in July the Government accepted more than 130 asylum seekers who were rescued from a sinking boat in international waters between Indonesia and Australia.

There were no reports of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution.

## Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercise this right in practice through periodic, free, and fair elections held on the basis of universal suffrage. Parliamentarians are elected under a mixed-member proportional representation system; the last general elections were held in November 1999.

The percentage of women and minorities in government and politics does not correspond to their percentage of the population, although they are accorded full opportunity to participate in political life. In the 120-member Parliament, 36 seats are held by women; 16 by Maori; 3 by members of Pacific Island origin; and 1 by a member of Asian heritage. The Executive Council has 25 ministers (20 within the Cabinet and 5 outside the Cabinet) including 10 women (1 of whom is the Prime Minister), 4 Maori, and 1 Pacific Islander. The Cabinet has seven women, two Maori, and one Pacific Islander. The Prime Minister, the former opposition leader, and the Chief Justice are women. In April Dame Silvia Cartwright took office as the new Governor General representing Queen Elizabeth II of England.

The percentage of women in government and politics in the dependent territories of the Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Niue does not correspond to their percentage of the population. Of the 25 members of the Cook Islands Parliament, 2 are women. In Niue, 2 of 20 are women.

## Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials are cooperative and responsive to their views. The Human Rights Commission, a U.N.-accredited national human rights institution,

investigates complaints of human rights violations and unlawful discrimination and acts as a conciliator. The Government also funds the office of a race relations conciliator, which was integrated into the National Human Rights Commission on December 31.

#### Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, disability, and language, and the Government effectively enforces it.

#### Women

Violence against women is a serious and growing problem. Assaults by males against females increased by more than 5 percent from 6,956 for the year as of June 2000 to 7,324 at the end of June. Publicity regarding domestic violence increased significantly after government ministers pressured a women's refuge coordinator in August 2000 not to publicize statistics regarding Maori spousal and child abuse rates. The total number of breaches of the Domestic Protection Act (including all races) increased from 4,200 in 2000 to 4,429 as of June. Over 150 cases involved a firearm when breaching protection orders. According to a 1994 Public Health Commission study (the latest statistics available), Maori women between the ages of 15 and 24 were 7 times more likely than non-Maori women to be hospitalized as a result of domestic assault. According to government statistics, 5,056 men were prosecuted for domestic assault in 1998, and about 1,000 more faced less serious family violence charges. In this study, Maori men constituted 41 percent of men convicted of assaulting a woman and 43 percent of men convicted of assaulting a child. Disproportionately high rates of domestic abuse also were documented among Pacific Islander families. Statistics not desegregated by race show that convictions for "male assaults female" fell 3.9 percent from 2,331 cases in 1999 to 2,240 cases in 2000. Assaults on a child fell 13 percent from 214 cases in 1999 to 186 cases in 2000.

The law penalizes spousal rape. The Government convicted persons on this charge during the year; however, it does not collect specific statistics on the offense. The National Collective of Rape Crisis groups, a private, nonprofit organization, claimed in 1998 that the majority of cases go unreported each year and that, of the cases that are reported to the police, only 10 to 15 percent result in convictions. The group reported that husbands and boyfriends committed about 25 percent of all sexual assaults.

The 1996 Domestic Violence Act broadened the definition of violence to include psychological abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, and allowing children to witness psychological abuse. It expanded intervention measures, such as the use of protection orders; education programs for men, women, and children; stronger police powers to arrest and detain offenders; improved access to legal services for women eligible for legal aid; and tougher penalties for breach of a protection order. The family court received 22,369 applications for protection orders under the act as of June 30.

The Government's strategy to prevent family violence included a range of objectives, such as providing victim support, incorporating successful innovations and proven methods from family violence centers into the national family violence programs (that is, the promotion of "best practice"), ensuring safety from violence, and implementing Maori-designed and delivered programs. The Government partially funded women's refuges, rape crisis centers, sexual abuse counseling, family violence networks, and violence prevention services.

In previous years, there were a small number of documented cases of female genital mutilation (FGM), which is widely condemned by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health. FGM traditionally is not practiced in the country, but cases have been documented in the Somali, Sudanese, and Ethiopian immigrant communities. The influx of persons from countries in which FGM is prevalent has slowed. In 1996 the Government made it illegal to perform FGM or to remove a child from the country to carry out the procedure; it is punishable by up to 7 years in prison. To address FGM, during the year, the Government sponsored public awareness campaigns, a child protection network, and a special clinic at the country's largest women's hospital. There were no FGM cases reported during the year.

Prostitution is legal; however, organizing and recruiting women into prostitution is not. The law prohibits sex tourism, and citizens who commit child sex offenses overseas can be prosecuted in New Zealand courts. There were no reports of abuse and the involuntary detention of women involved in prostitution during the year (see Section 6.f.). In 2000 there were several credible reports that women were trafficked into the country and forced into prostitution; however, there were no such reports during the year (see Sections 6.c. and 6.f.).

The law prohibits sexual harassment; however, it is a serious problem. In a survey commissioned by the National Human Rights Commission, 31 percent of women and 13 percent of men reported experiences of sexual harassment. In September the commission started a Sexual Harassment Prevention Campaign,

including a week focused on the problem, to attempt to eliminate the abuse.

While the law prohibits discrimination in employment and in rates of pay for equal or similar work, the Government continued to acknowledge that a gender earnings gap persists in practice. Statistics as of August showed that women earned 84.6 percent of men's average total wage and 84.55 percent of men's average ordinary hourly wage, down from 86 percent in 2000.

#### Children

The law provides specific safeguards for children's rights and protection. The Government demonstrates its commitment to children's rights and welfare through its well-funded systems of public education and medical care. In November the Government instituted 12 weeks of government-funded, paid parental leave to care for children born after July 2002.

The law provides for compulsory, free, and universal education through age 16, and the Government effectively enforces the law. The Government provides free health care to all children under age 5.

Child abuse continued to gain significant attention during the year, especially after three toddlers died of physical abuse. In June a woman was sentenced to 6 years in prison after pleading guilty to killing her 23-month-old niece. A second family member also received a prison sentence for involvement in the death of the child. In July 2000, a toddler was killed, and a second child suffered brain damage, as a result of abuse by family members. Family members were sentenced to 6 years in prison. During the year, Child, Youth, and Family Services were notified of 2,370 cases of physical abuse, 1,412 cases of sexual abuse, and 2,424 cases of severe emotional abuse of children. In the year ending June 30, 2000, 2 children under age 15 died in assaults, down from 12 in 1997. In the past, the Government has reported that Maori children are four times as likely as non-Maori children to require hospital care for injuries resulting from deliberate harm. In August 2000, the Government instituted an expanded program of information sharing between the courts and health and child protection agencies to identify children at risk of abuse. Notifications to child protection agencies of at-risk children increased by 30 percent in the program's first month; total notifications over the year increased by 4 percent. Applications to family court included protection of more than 33,000 children.

In previous years, there were a small number of documented cases of FGM, which usually is performed on young girls, in the Somali, Sudanese, and Ethiopian immigrant communities (see Section 5, Women).

Incidents of trafficking in children for sexual purposes have been documented; however, there were no instances during the year. The Government works with the nongovernmental organization (NGO) ECPAT NZ to combat trafficking in children and to develop legislation that would criminalize trafficking (see Section 6.f.); however, legislation was not completed during the year.

#### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to places and facilities, and the provision of goods, services, and accommodation. Compliance with access laws varies. The Human Rights Amendment Act passed in 1999 introduced a new standard for government compliance to replace the exemption for government that expired during the year. The Government is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of disability, mental or physical, unless such discrimination can be "demonstrably justified in a free, democratic society." The Human Rights Commission reported during the year that it received more complaints of discrimination based on disability than any other type of discrimination. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has criticized the Government for not collecting adequate data regarding the employment of persons with disabilities.

During the year, the Human Rights Commission funded a public campaign to feature prominent citizens who have suffered from mental disabilities.

#### Indigenous People

Approximately 15 percent of the population claim at least one ancestor from the country's indigenous Maori or Moriori minorities. While the law prohibits discrimination against the indigenous population, the Government's Closing the Gaps report, released in May 2000, noted the continuing disproportionate number of Maori on the unemployment and welfare rolls, in prison, among school dropouts, in infant mortality statistics, and among single-parent households. For example, the official Maori unemployment rate (12.3 percent) is over 3 times that of non-Maori. Maori officials continued to express concern over the Government's announcement in November 2000 that it would shift its Closing the Gaps strategy to address socioeconomic disparities rather

than race-based disparities.

Maori inmates constitute more than half the prison population. The Government addressed the problem of recidivism among Maori through Maori focus units, which integrate Maori values into the prison rehabilitation program. A special program for Maori sex offenders, Kia Marama, halved the rate of recidivism among those who participated.

Government policy recognizes a special role for indigenous people and their traditional values and customs, including cultural and environmental issues that have an effect on commercial development. The Ministry of Maori Development, in cooperation with several Maori NGO's, seeks to improve the status of indigenous people. A special tribunal continues to hear Maori tribal claims to land and other natural resources stemming from the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi.

#### National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Pacific Islanders, who make up 5 percent of the population, experience societal discrimination similar to that experienced by Maori. Pacific Islanders also are overrepresented in the prison system, accounting for 10 percent of inmates. Asians, who make up less than 5 percent of the population, also experience discrimination.

#### Section 6 Worker Rights

##### a. The Right of Association

Workers have the right to establish and join organizations of their own choosing. The principal labor organization is the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, a federation that includes unions representing various trades and locations. In August 2000, the Council of Trade Unions merged with the second-largest labor federation, the New Zealand Trade Union Federation. As a result, nearly all unionized workers are members of the Council of Trade Unions. A few small, independent labor unions also exist. Unions represent fewer than 20 percent of all wage earners.

Labor organization is rudimentary in the territory of Tokelau (population 1,500) and in the Freely Associated State of Niue (population 1,700). In the more developed Associated State of the Cook Islands (population 19,000), most workers in the public sector, the major employer, belong to the Cook Islands Workers' Association, an independent local union. Industrial relations in the Cook Islands are governed by a simplified version of national legislation.

The law protects unions from governmental interference, suspension, and dissolution. Unions influence legislation and government policy. Some unions are affiliated with the Labor Party; others operate independently of political parties; all are free to support parties whose policies they favor.

Unions often exercise the right to strike. Significant limitations on the right to strike were eliminated when the Employment Relations Act (ERA) replaced the Employment Contracts Act in October 2000; unions are no longer limited to strikes related to the negotiation of a collective contract and may strike in pursuit of multiemployer contracts across an entire economic sector.

In the 12 months that ended in June there were 33 work stoppages, involving approximately 5,265 workers and the loss of approximately \$1.216 million (\$NZ2.897 million) in wages and salaries.

Under the law, "sworn police officers," that is, all uniformed and plainclothes police but excluding clerical and support staff, are barred from striking or taking any form of industrial action. However, police have freedom of association and the right to organize and to bargain collectively. Disputes that cannot be settled by negotiation between the Police Association and management are subject to compulsory, final-offer arbitration. Other than the police and armed forces, essential service employees such as prison workers are permitted to strike.

The Freedom of Association Committee of the ILO ruled in 1994 that the Employment Contracts Act of 1991 does not promote collective bargaining and limits the right of freedom of association and the right to strike in a manner inconsistent with ILO conventions. The Government contends that the ERA of 2000 is consistent with ILO conventions. Discussions with the ILO to confirm this understanding continued at year's end. Sympathy strikes, secondary strikes, and strikes over social or political causes are illegal. Unions may affiliate internationally. The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions is affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

#### b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law provides for the right of workers to organize and contract collectively, and this right is observed in practice. In 2000 the Government changed the law governing industrial relations significantly. It repealed the Employment Contracts Act of 1991 and replaced it with the Employment Relations Act. The ERA promotes collective bargaining, strengthens unions, and requires that parties to an employment agreement bargain in good faith to achieve either a collective or individual employment agreement. The act also promotes mediation and attempts to reduce the need for judicial intervention. The law prohibits uniformed members of the armed forces from organizing unions and bargaining collectively; however, other than police and armed forces personnel, public services employees may organize and strike.

Unions represent fewer than 20 percent of all wage earners. Under the ERA, employment relationships are based on contracts. Individual employees and employers may choose to conduct negotiations for employment contracts on their own behalf, or they may authorize any other person or organization to do so on their behalf. Although choosing a union is entirely voluntary, unions have remained the most common agents used by workers to negotiate with employers. Employers must recognize a representative authorized by an employee or employees.

The Government does not control mediation and arbitration procedures. The ERA strongly encourages mediation and requires that the majority of employment disputes first proceed through mediation. It also established an Employment Relations Authority as an investigative body to establish the facts of an employment relationship dispute and to make a determination according to the merits of the case. There is also an employment court with exclusive jurisdiction over employment matters. Appeals from the Employment Court to the Court of Appeal are possible. Firing an employee for union activities is grounds for a finding of unjustified dismissal and may result in reinstatement and financial compensation.

The law prohibits antiunion discrimination against members and organizers. In one case, the courts fined a major company for having union organizers arrested for trespass when the organizers were conducting a labor compliance survey at the company facility.

There are no export processing zones.

#### c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including forced and bonded labor by children; and there were no reports that such practices occurred. Inspection and legal penalties ensure respect for provisions against forced labor. There were no reports of the involuntary detention of women involved in prostitution or the trafficking of women for prostitution during the year (see Section 6.f.). In April 2000, the Government convicted and fined the operators of a factory in Auckland in which workers had been exploited; seven Thai women escaped slave labor conditions in October 1999 (see Section 6.f.). One formerly trafficked woman won compensation in Thailand, outside the court system, from a trafficker (see Section 6.f.). The victim's receipt of the compensation was verified.

Trafficking in women and children appears no longer to be a problem (see Section 6.f.).

#### d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Department of Labor inspectors effectively enforce a ban on the employment of children under the age of 15 years in manufacturing, mining, and forestry. Children under the age of 16 may not work between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. By law children enrolled in school may not be employed, even outside school hours, if such employment would interfere with their education.

On June 14, the Government ratified ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labor.

The Government prohibits forced and bonded child labor and enforces this prohibition effectively; although trafficking in children has been a problem, there were no cases during the year (see Sections 6.c. and 6.f.).

#### e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

A 40-hour workweek is traditional. There are legal limits regarding hours worked; for example, professional drivers must have a 24-hour rest period after an 11-hour day; there is premium pay for overtime work. While the law does not provide specifically for a 24-hour rest period weekly, management and labor accept the

practice, and it is the norm. The law provides for a minimum 3-week annual paid vacation and 11 paid public holidays. In 2000 the Government mandated an hourly minimum wage of approximately \$3.20 (\$NZ7.70) and lowered the minimum age of eligibility for this wage to cover workers ages 18 to 20. Combined with other regularly provided entitlements and welfare benefits for low-income earners, this wage generally is adequate to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. The minimum wage for younger workers (ages 16 to 17) is 60 percent of the adult minimum. A majority of the work force earned more than the minimum wage. The youth minimum wage of approximately \$2.26 (\$NZ5.40) applies to workers of ages 16 to 17. This rate is scheduled to rise to \$2.85 (\$NZ6.15) in March 2002.

Extensive laws and regulations govern health and safety issues. Under these rules, employers are obliged to provide a safe and healthy work environment, and employees are responsible for their own safety and health, as well as ensuring that their actions do not harm others. As a result of union criticism, the law is under review by Parliament; however, at year's end there had been no action resulting from the review. Workers have the legal right to strike over health and safety issues. Unions, and members of the general public, may file safety complaints on behalf of workers. Department of Labor inspectors effectively enforce safety and health rules, and they have the power to shut down equipment if necessary. The Department of Labor standard is to investigate reports of unsafe or unhealthy working conditions within 24 hours of notification. Inspectors may issue notices of deficiencies and bring prosecutorial action to enforce workplace safety. Workers have the right to withdraw from a dangerous work situation without jeopardy to continued employment.

Labor laws are applied to foreign workers in the same manner as they are to citizens.

#### f. Trafficking in Persons

The law does not address trafficking in persons specifically, and the applicable related crime, aiding and abetting the breach of immigration regulations, carries relatively light penalties; however, there were no reports that persons were trafficked to, from, or within the country during the year. Laws against child sexual exploitation and slavery carry penalties of up to 14 years in prison and, in recent years, have been used to prosecute citizens for trafficking in women and girls.

There were no incidents of trafficking in children for sexual purposes documented during the year.

Trafficking in women and children (particularly from Thailand) to work in the sex industry has been a problem. There were several credible reports that women and children were trafficked into the country during previous years; however, there were no such reports during the year. In 2000 domestic NGO's and the Human Rights Commission assisted six Thai women in repatriating to Thailand after they escaped forced work in the sex industry. One of the women sued in New Zealand to recover money that she had paid to traffickers; she claimed that the defendants had advertised the work as catering or agriculture. During the year, she received compensation outside the legal system after having returned to Thailand. In October 1999, seven Thai women were freed from slave labor conditions in an Auckland factory (see Section 6.c.). During the year, the Government ended visa free-entry for Thais.

The Government is working to develop legislation to criminalize trafficking and works with an NGO, ECPAT NZ, to combat trafficking in children. A coalition in Auckland was established to provide information to persons at risk of being trafficked into the country.